DOCUMENTS

What Data Is Collected About You Online and How to Stop It

This text is a shortened version of an entry from the blog of Mr. Mehmood Hanif from June 15, 2018.

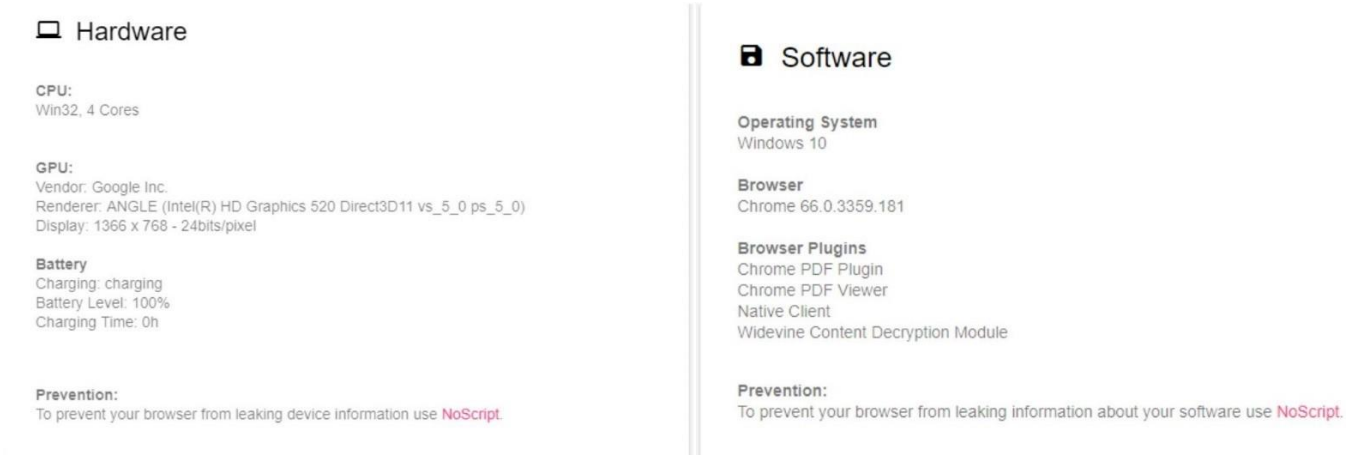
When browsing the internet, you leave behind digital traces that websites can legally use to keep track of your activities and identify you. The data collected can include; your location, what device you're using, which advertisements you've clicked on, and more.
And that's just the tip of the iceberg…

What Your Browser Reveals About You

No matter what the privacy settings of your browser are, certain information about you is inevitably revealed to the sites you visit. For example, you start sharing your IP address as soon as you go online, which can be used to pinpoint your approximate location.

Your browser also reveals its name, allowing sites to know whether you're a Firefox, Explorer, or Chrome user. It even goes as far as showing the current battery level if you're online from a phone, tablet, or laptop.

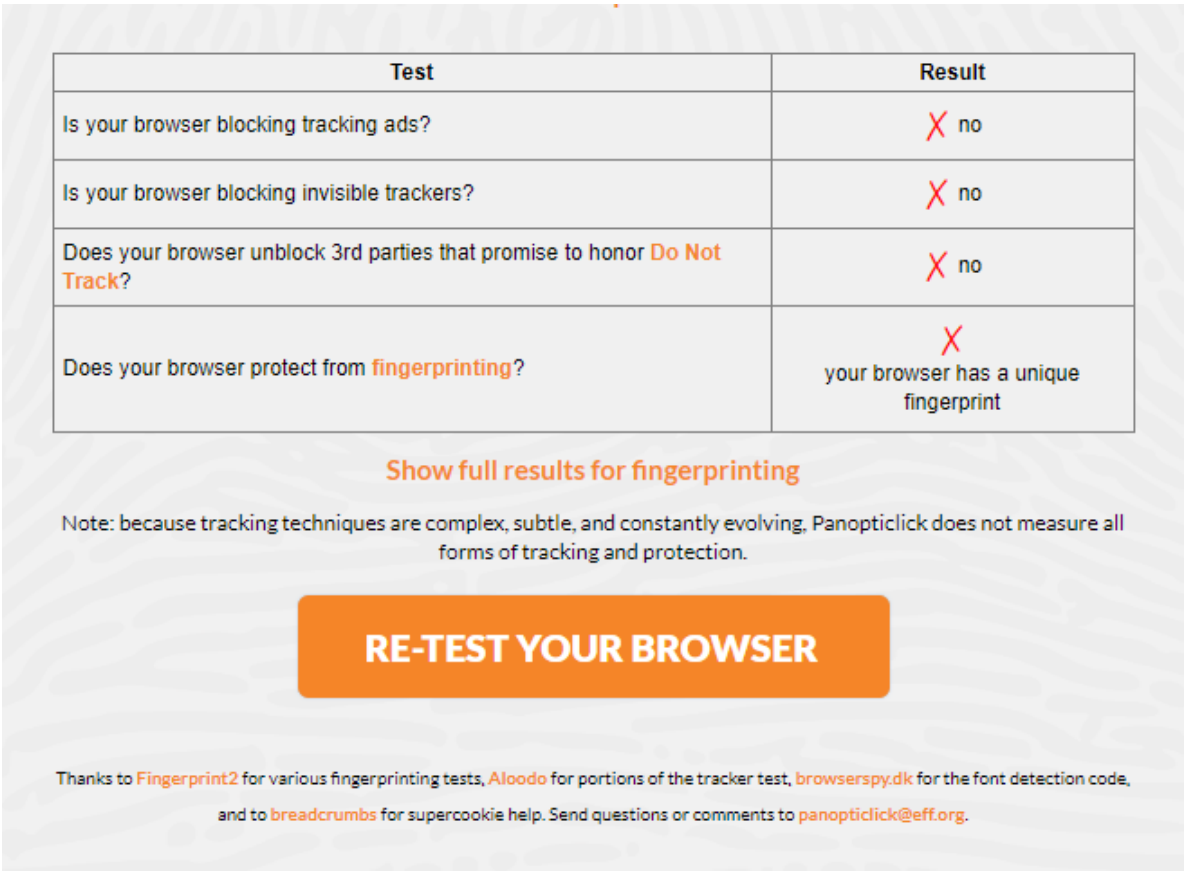
Other information revealed by your browser includes: which operating system you're running, what CPU and GPU are you using, the screen resolution and the browser plugins you've installed. If you want to see all the data your browser knows about you, visit Webkay and you'll find all the information sites can access about you without your explicit permission.



Browser fingerprinting is another method used by sites to identify users even if they don't enter any personally identifiable information (PII). It involves tracking and detecting the configuration and settings information that browsers make visible.

Since it's highly improbable that someone else is using your very own special combination of screen size, hardware, browser plugins, browser software, and so on – sites can easily guess

whether or not you're the same lad who dropped by last month and serve you some relevant advertisements. Panopticlick can tell if your browser is safe against this type of tracking.



Test	Result
Is your browser blocking tracking ads?	✗ no
Is your browser blocking invisible trackers?	✗ no
Does your browser unblock 3rd parties that promise to honor Do Not Track?	✗ no
Does your browser protect from fingerprinting?	✗ your browser has a unique fingerprint

Show full results for fingerprinting

Note: because tracking techniques are complex, subtle, and constantly evolving, Panopticlick does not measure all forms of tracking and protection.

RE-TEST YOUR BROWSER

Thanks to Fingerprint2 for various fingerprinting tests, Aloodo for portions of the tracker test, browserspy.dk for the font detection code, and to breadcrumbs for supercookie help. Send questions or comments to panopticlick@eff.org.

Now, moving on to the information sites harvest themselves…

What Information Can Websites Collect?
It's no secret that sites want to know as much as possible about their visitors, whether it's to show them targeted ads or improve their user experience. For this, they make use of cookies which are small text files placed on your system when you visit a site for the first time.

Cookies tell a site when a user has returned and also hold your site preferences for your next visit. This is exactly how sites remember your shopping basket as you browse for other items that you'd like to purchase.

While this is useful for both users and site owners, it's worth mentioning that not all cookies are safe for munching. Sure, sites can only access the cookies they've placed, but we also have what are known as third-party cookies!

As the name implies, these cookies are placed by a site other than the one you're visiting. They're mostly used by marketers or advertisers to track your browsing activities across multiple sites and serve you tailored ads, so you're better off deleting cookies when you finish browsing.
Internet providers, which can now legally collect and sell your browsing history without your authorization, also let advertisers know;

- *who you are,*
- *where you've been,*
- *who you've been talking to and*
- *what you're interested in.*

All these pieces of information are tied together to create a very detailed profile about you, and it only gets more detailed…
What Other Data Do You Give Away Voluntarily?
(We cut the text here.)